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MARVEL® COMICS GROUP



MASTER OF KUNG FU

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TM

FLIGHT
INTO
FEAR!



YAC / JEDAY

"Call me Shang-Chi, as my *father* did, when he raised me in the vacuum of his Honan, China retreat. Since then, I have learned that my father is Dr. Fu Manchu, the most insidiously evil man on earth...and that to *honor* him would bring nothing but *dishonor* to the spirit of my name.

Stan Lee PRESENTS: **MASTER OF KUNG FU!**®

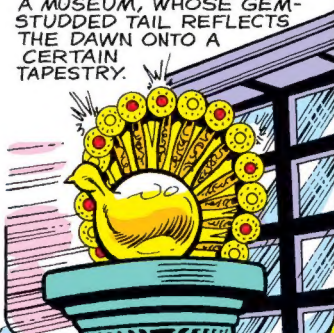
Featuring supporting characters created by SAX ROHMER

"A DYING MAN'S LAST WORDS, SHAPED INTO A RIDDLE: 'HANEMARAK IN TWO THREES... CHEMIST'S RAINBOW BIRD... AT DAWN'..."

"HANEMARAK, IN REVERSE, IS THE NAME OF PETRIE'S EGYPTIAN WIFE **KARA-MENAH--**

"--WHO, IN THE TWO THREES OF 1933, GAVE CHEMIST PETRIE THE STATUE OF A PEACOCK--

"--A 'RAINBOW BIRD,' NOW IN A MUSEUM, WHOSE GEM-STUDDED TAIL REFLECTS THE DAWN ONTO A CERTAIN TAPESTRY.



"BEHIND THIS TAPESTRY WAS HIDDEN A MESSAGE CONTAINING INFORMATION ABOUT MY FATHER, FU MANCHU.

LIKE A GOD, WEEPING FIRE

LG561

DOUG MOENCH / WRITER | MIKE ZECK / PENCILER | GENE DAY / INKER | D. ALBERS, LETTERER | B. SHAREN, COLORIST | R. STERN / EDITOR | J. SHOOTER / EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

"BUT NOW, SHORTLY AFTER DAWN OUTSIDE THE MUSEUM, WE KNOW THE RIDDLE WAS A TRAP... AND THE MESSAGE, SHAPED LIKE A DRAGON, MERELY TAUNTS--



MY SISTER...

WHAT NOW?

BACK TO RESTON'S PLACE TO PICK LECKS' BRAIN.



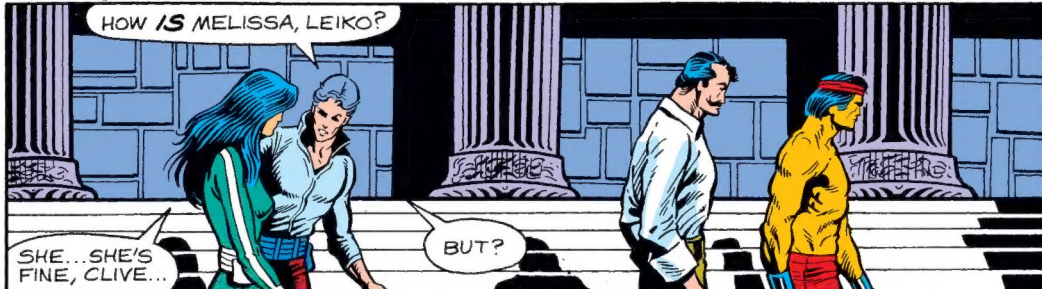
AFTER ALL, HE STASHED THE **REAL** INFO PACKET BEHIND THAT TAPESTRY-- THE ONE FAH LO SUEE SWITCHED FOR THIS DRAGON-JAPE.

I HOPE IT DOESN'T TAKE LONG, BLACK JACK. I'M GETTING ANXIOUS ABOUT LEAVING SIR DENIS AND MELISSA GREVILLE ALONE AT THE CASTLE IN SCOTLAND.



"WE ALL ARE."

HOW *IS* MELISSA, LEIKO?

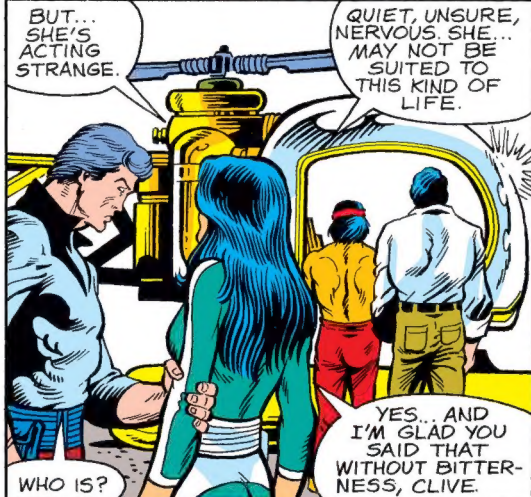


SHE... SHE'S FINE, CLIVE...

BUT?

BUT... SHE'S ACTING STRANGE.

QUIET, UNSURE, NERVOUS. SHE... MAY NOT BE SUITED TO THIS KIND OF LIFE.



WHO IS?

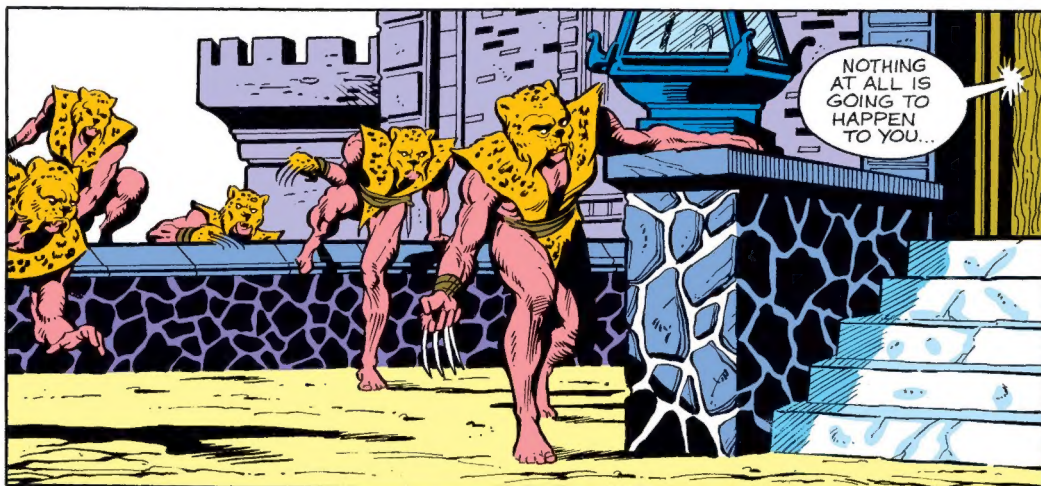
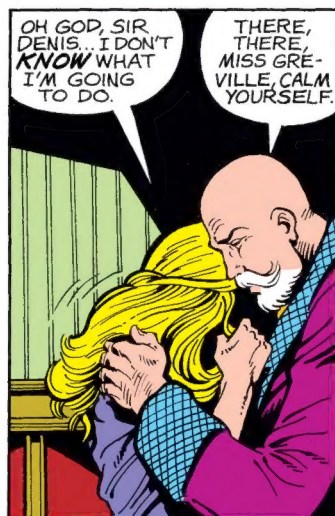
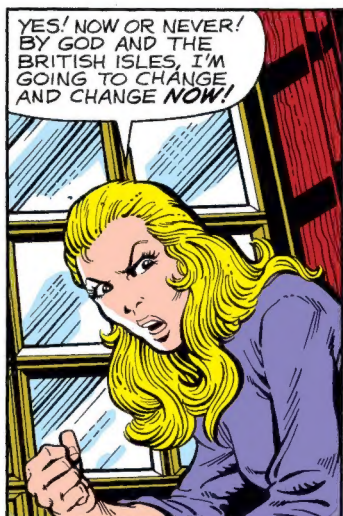
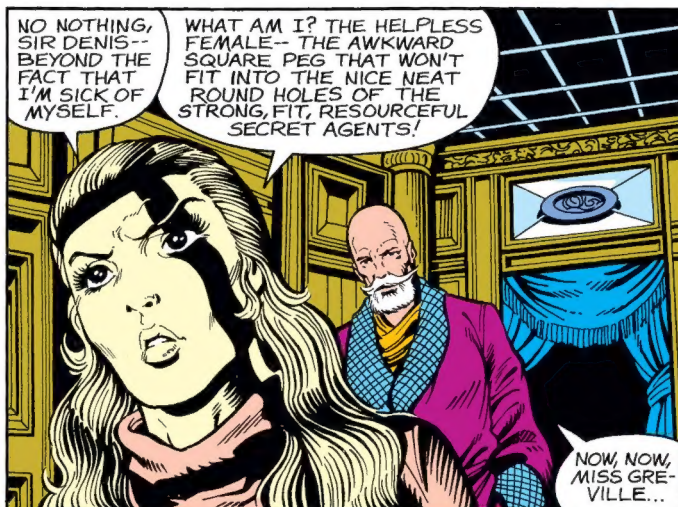
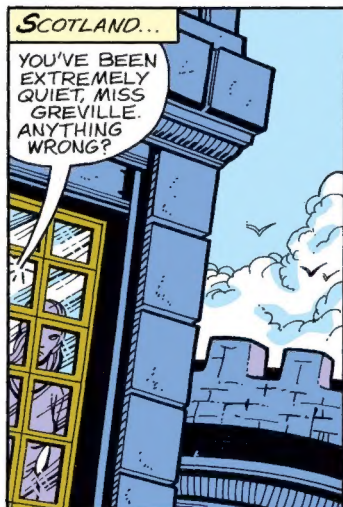
YES... AND I'M GLAD YOU SAID THAT WITHOUT BITTERNESS, CLIVE.

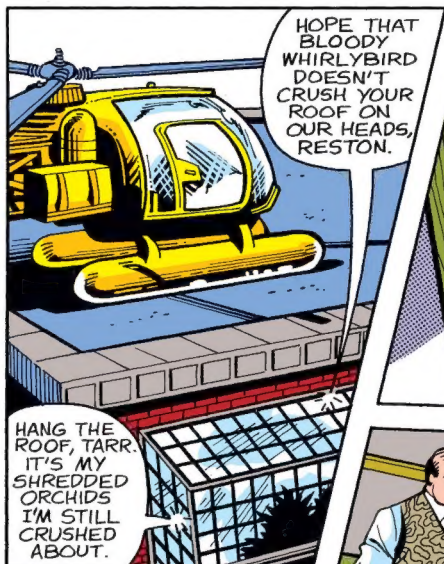
YOU MEAN I COULD HAVE SAID SOMETHING LIKE, "DON'T FLATTER YOURSELF, WU-- YOU HAVEN'T GOT A CORNER ON THE ABLE-FEMALE MARKET."



SOMETHING LIKE THAT, YES.

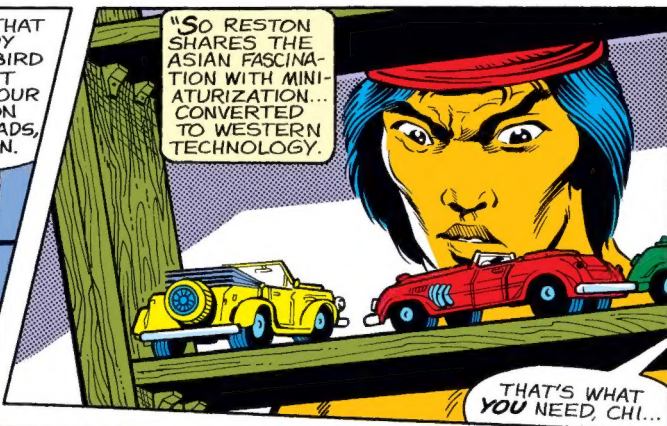






HOPE THAT BLOODY WHIRLYBIRD DOESN'T CRUSH YOUR ROOF ON OUR HEADS, RESTON.

HANG THE ROOF, TARR. IT'S MY SHREDDED ORCHIDS I'M STILL CRUSHED ABOUT.



"SO RESTON SHARES THE ASIAN FASCINATION WITH MINIATURIZATION... CONVERTED TO WESTERN TECHNOLOGY.

THAT'S WHAT YOU NEED, CHI...



...A GOOD HOBBY TO MAKE YOU FORGET THE REALITIES OF THIS WONDERFUL WORLD.

SEE WHAT I MEAN ABOUT THOSE REALITIES?

YEAH, YEAH, NOW LET'S GET DOWN TO BLOODY BUSINESS.



BUT BLACK JACK'S RIGHT. MRS. HAVERSHAM, IF YOU'D BRING US ALL SOME TEA AND COFFEE--

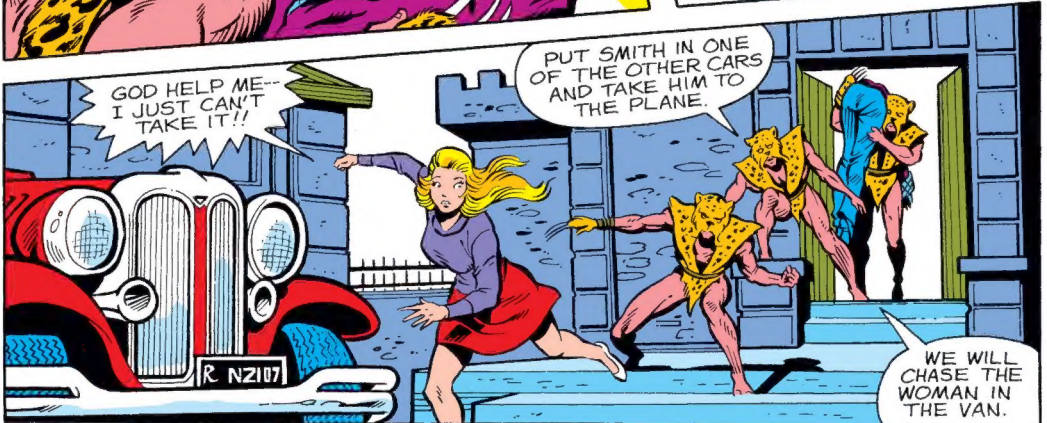
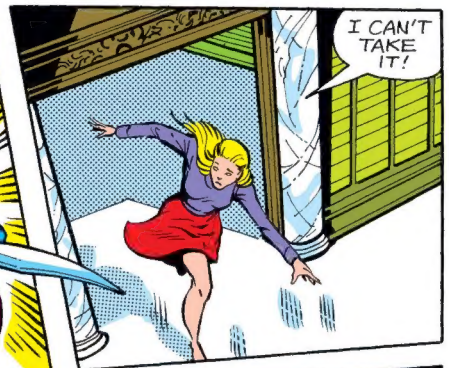
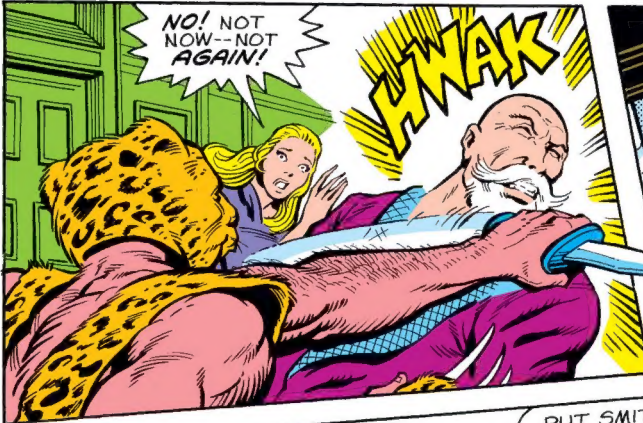
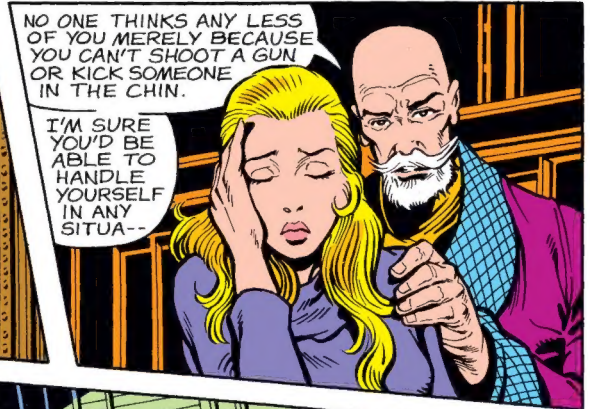
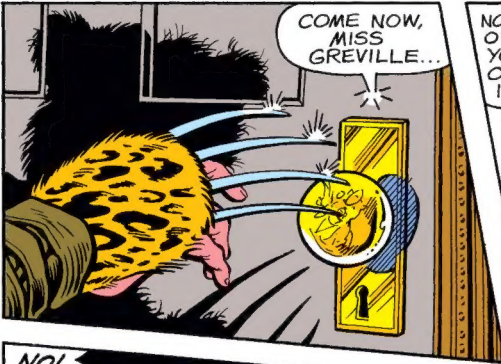
AND WATER.

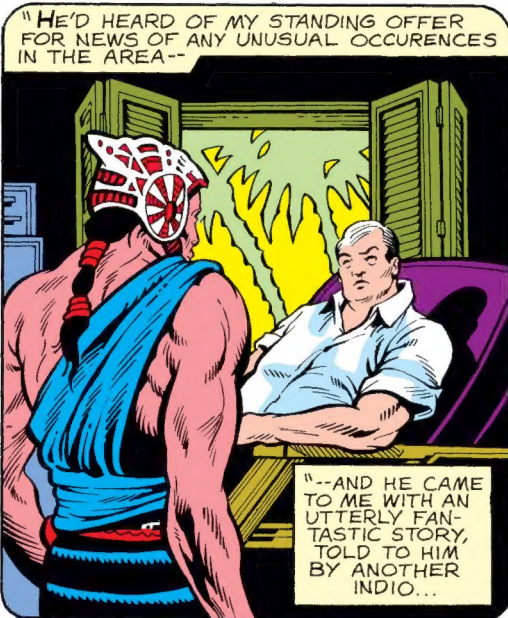
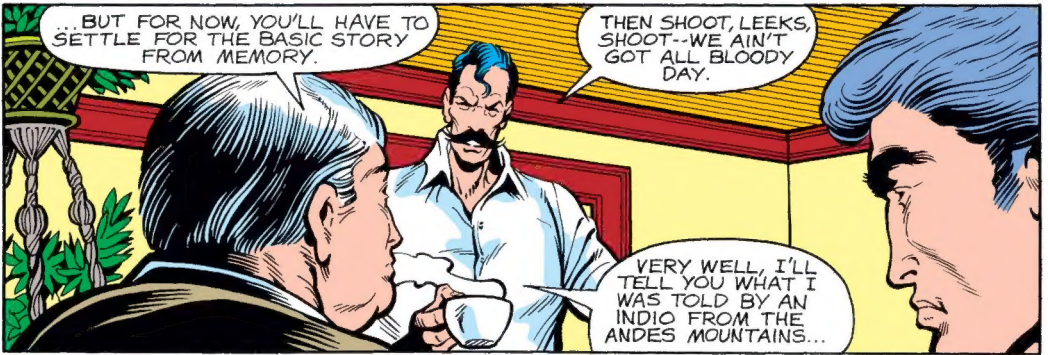
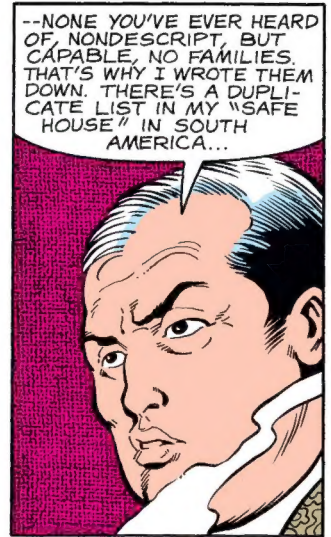
--AND WATER FOR THE PURIST HERE, WE CAN GET DOWN TO THE GRISLY TASK OF CRACKING LEEKS' SKULL.



JUST FIGURATIVELY SPEAKING, LEEKS. WE DO WANT TO RUMMAGE THROUGH YOUR BRAIN, BUT QUESTIONS WILL SERVE AS WELL AS BLUDGEONS.

WELL, THANK GOD AND THE QUEEN FOR THAT.





AND YOU THINK THIS SO-CALLED "GOD" WAS FU MANCHU, LEEKS?

IT COULD'VE BEEN, TARR. IF HE *IS* ALIVE, HIS SPACE CAPSULE HAD TO RETURN TO EARTH **SOMEWHERE.** DON'T YOU REMEMBER?

"THE MODULAR CAPSULE THAT SPLIT OFF FROM THE SPACE STATION WAS HIS FAILSAFE LAST-ESCAPE..."

"YEAH, RESTON, I REMEMBER--BUT IT WAS ALSO HIS SUICIDE CHARIOT, AFTER THE CHINAMAN 'SLEW HIS DREAM,' HE VANISHED INTO DEEP SPACE."



MAYBE HE ONLY WANTED US TO **THINK** HE WAS COMMITTING SUICIDE. MAYBE THE CAPSULE WAS EQUIPPED WITH CONTROLS, AND ALL ALONG HE WAS PLANNING TO--

HARUMPH! PERHAPS IF YOU'D PERMIT *ME* TO FINISH...?



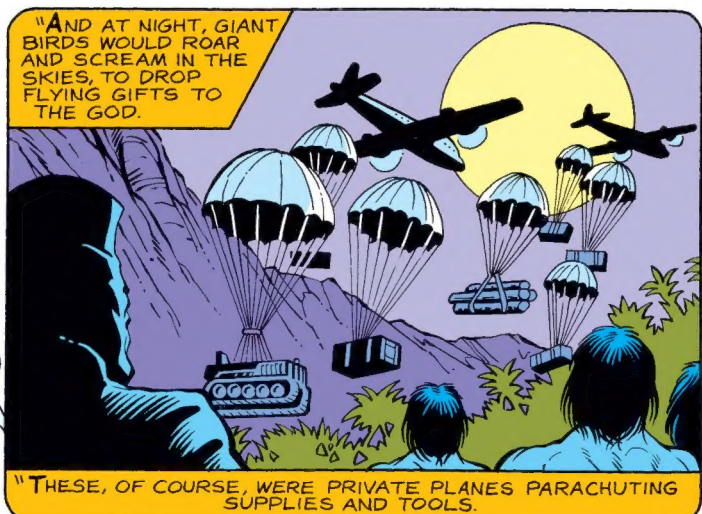
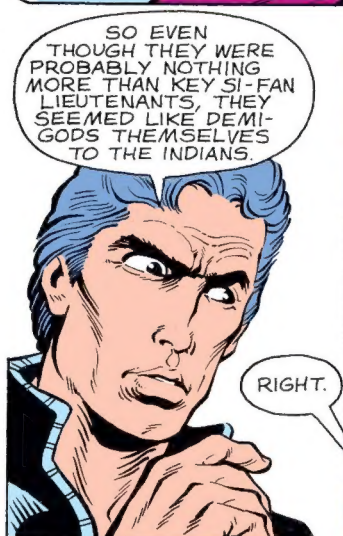
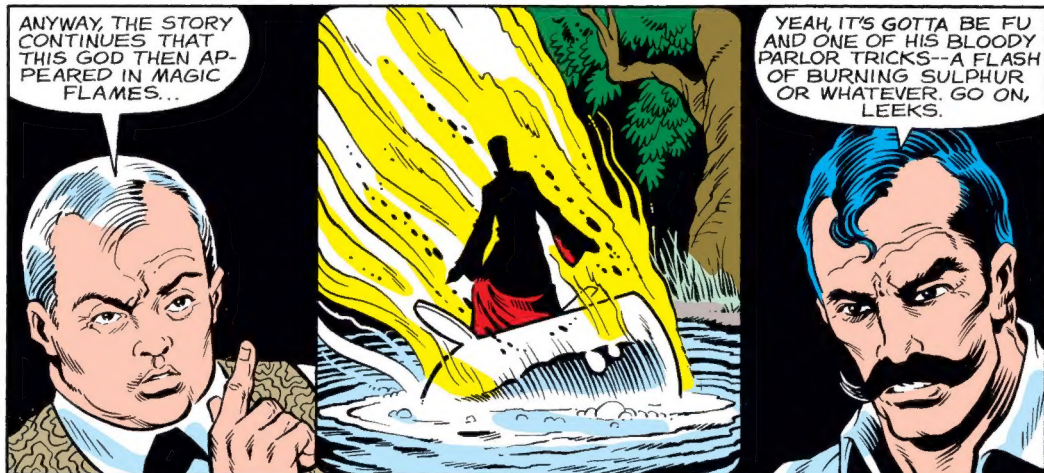
"AS I WAS SAYING, THIS GOD CAME DOWN FROM THE HEAVENS, TURNING THEIR LAGOON TO FIRE AND--"

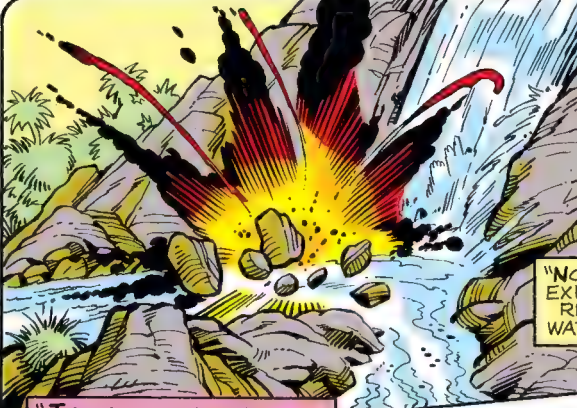


THE HEAT FROM THE FRICTION OF RETURNING INTO THE ATMOSPHERE--OR EVEN ROCKETS--**COULD** CAUSE A SMALL BODY OF WATER TO BOIL...

YES, YES, MISS WU--**QUITE.**



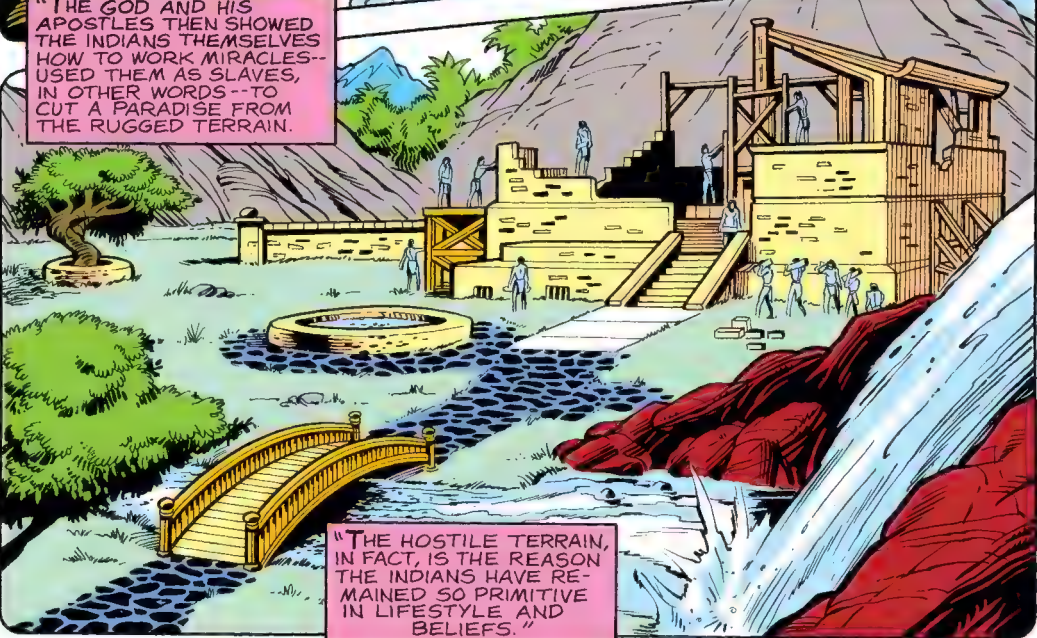




"HE USED THESE 'GIFTS OF MAGIC' TO CALL ON THE GODS' THUNDER, THEREBY CHANGING THE COURSE OF RIVERS.

"NO DOUBT MERE EXPLOSIVES TO RECHANNEL WATER FLOW.

"THE GOD AND HIS APOSTLES THEN SHOWED THE INDIANS THEMSELVES HOW TO WORK MIRACLES--USED THEM AS SLAVES, IN OTHER WORDS--TO CUT A PARADISE FROM THE RUGGED TERRAIN.



"THE HOSTILE TERRAIN, IN FACT, IS THE REASON THE INDIANS HAVE REMAINED SO PRIMITIVE IN LIFESTYLE AND BELIEFS."



A COMMON CIGARETTE LIGHTER WOULD SEEM LIKE A MIRACLE TO THEM, MAKING THIS A PERFECT PLACE FOR FU TO HATCH HIS NEXT MASTER PLAN WHILE ACQUIRING A LOCAL ARMY OF FANATICS ABSOLUTELY LOYAL TO HIM.

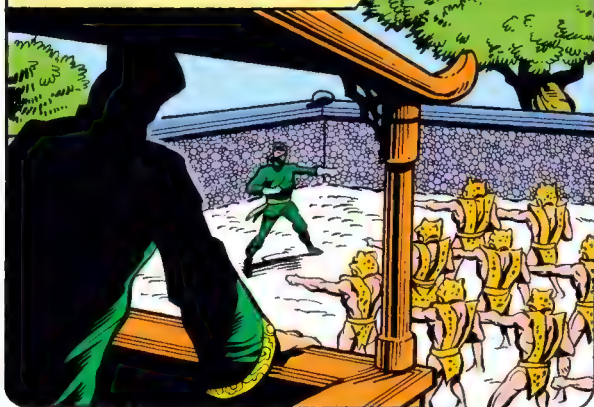


PERFECT PROOF OF CLARKE'S LAW. YOU SEE, LEEKS, I'M A BIT OF A SCIENCE FICTION BUFF--

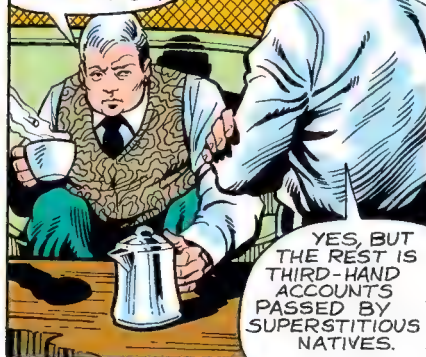
--AND ARTHUR C. CLARKE HAS SAID: "ANY SUFFICIENTLY ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY WILL BE INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM MAGIC." GOD AS A SUPREME SCIENTIST. GETS A BIT FUZZY, EH?

INDEED.

"HE LOST NO TIME IN EXPLOITING HIS WORSHIPPERS. TRAINED INTO A NEW SECT OF SI-FAN, THE ELITE LEOPARD-CULT, SOME OF THEM INFILTRATED THE NEAREST INTELLIGENCE BASES--INCLUDING MY MI-6 BRANCH."



THAT'S WHY I FEARED INTERCEPTION OF OUR INFO TRANSFER, AND WITH GOOD REASON. THE LEOPARD-CULT IS ON TO US.



YES, BUT THE REST IS THIRD-HAND ACCOUNTS PASSED BY SUPERSTITIOUS NATIVES.

NOT THAT I DOUBT FU'S PRESENCE DOWN THERE, BUT WHERE'S THE EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE **DETAILS** OF THIS NEW MYTH?



I COAXED THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT INTO AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE OF A FULL THIRD OF THE COUNTRY. THE PLANES TOOK LITERALLY THOUSANDS OF HIGH ALTITUDE PHOTOS.

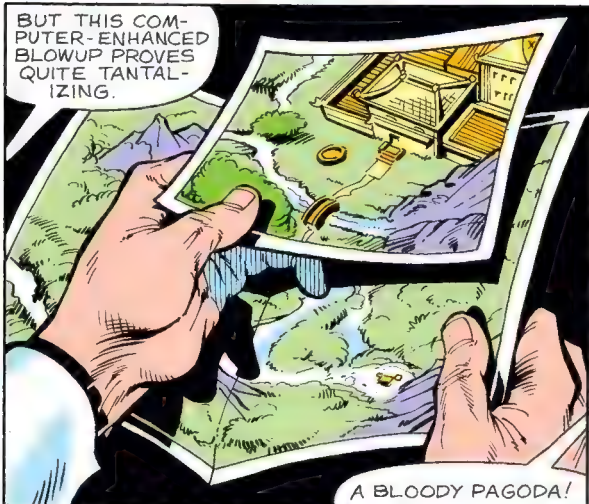
THIS IS ONE OF THEM.

A MASS OF JUNGLE. WHAT DOES THAT PROVE?



NOTHING, TARR.

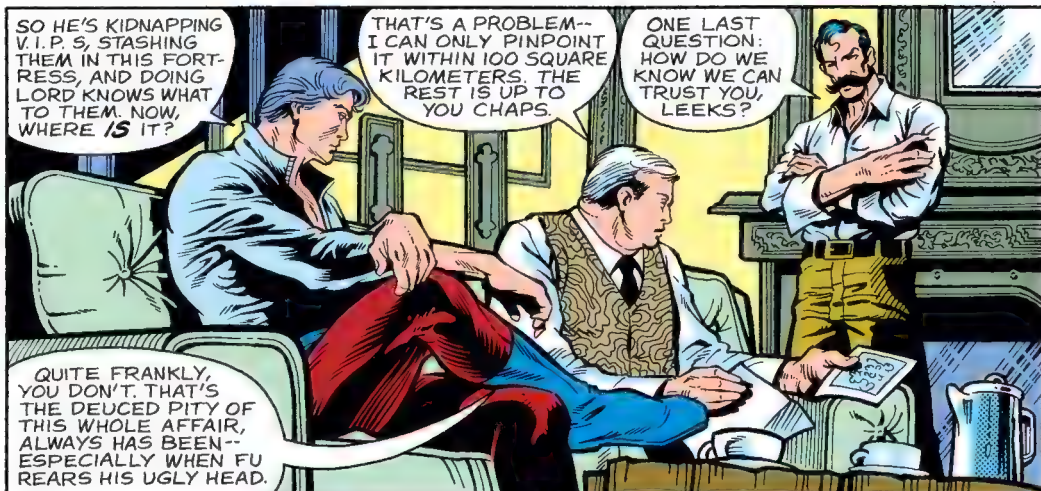
BUT THIS COMPUTER-ENHANCED BLOWUP PROVES QUITE TANTALIZING.

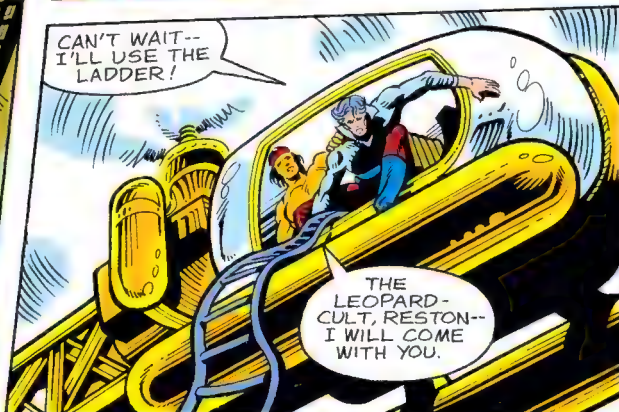
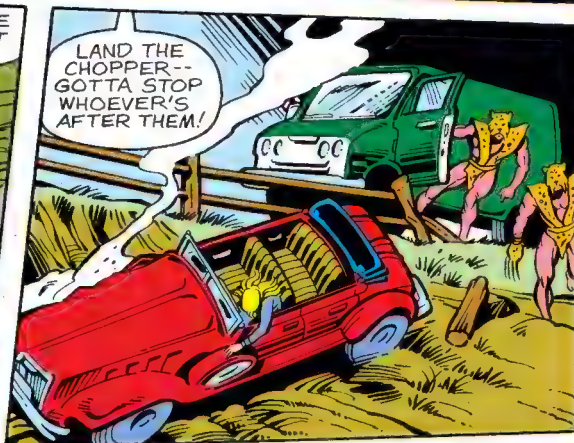
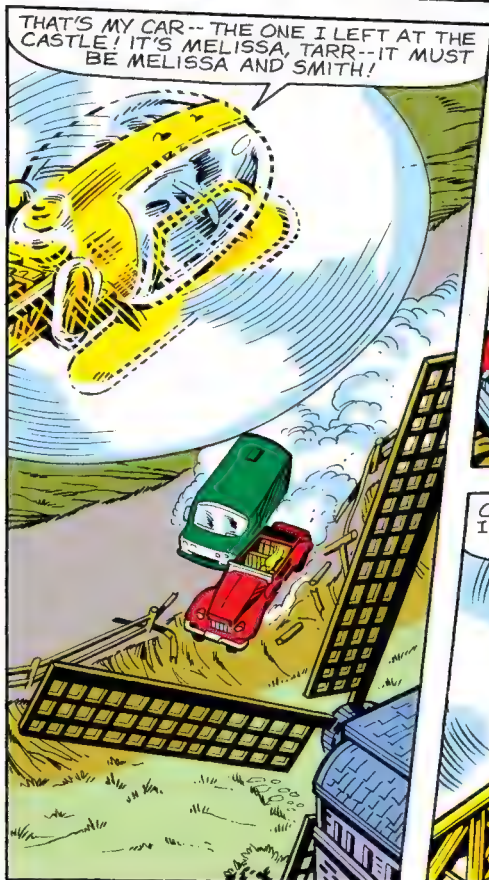
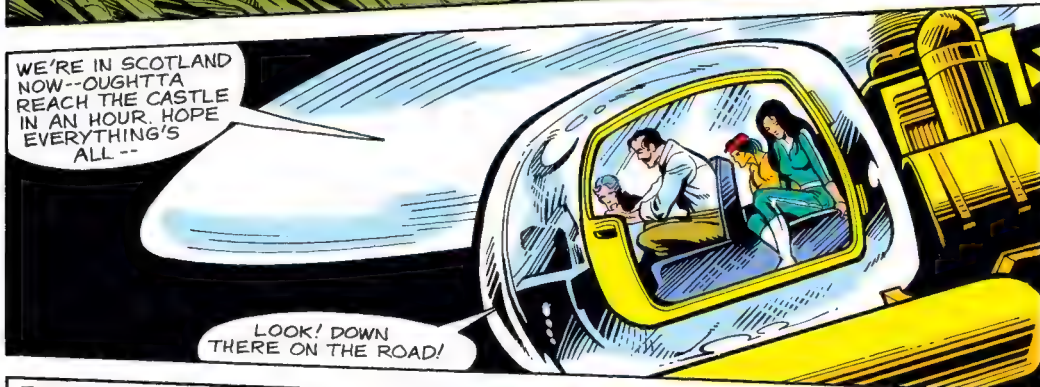
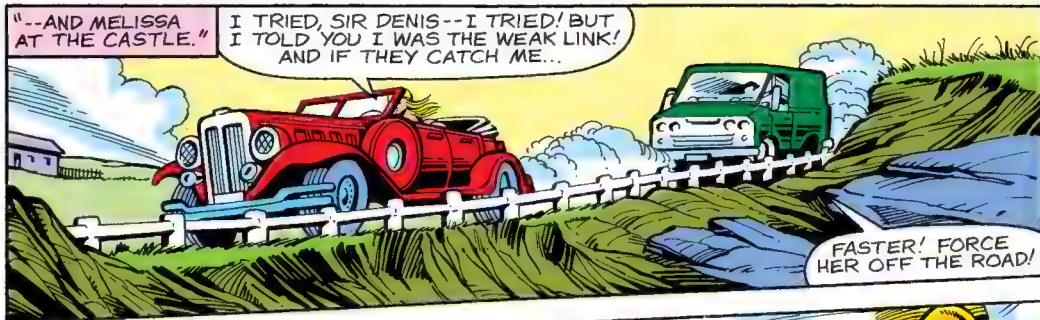


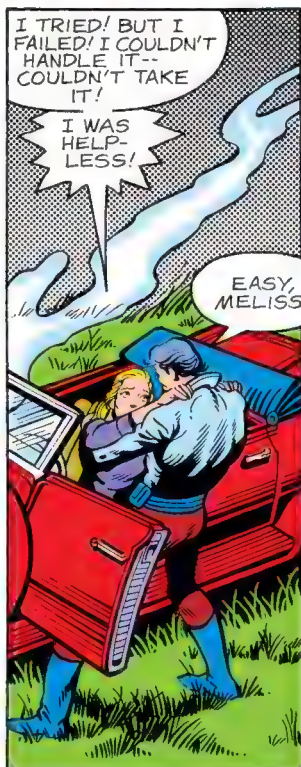
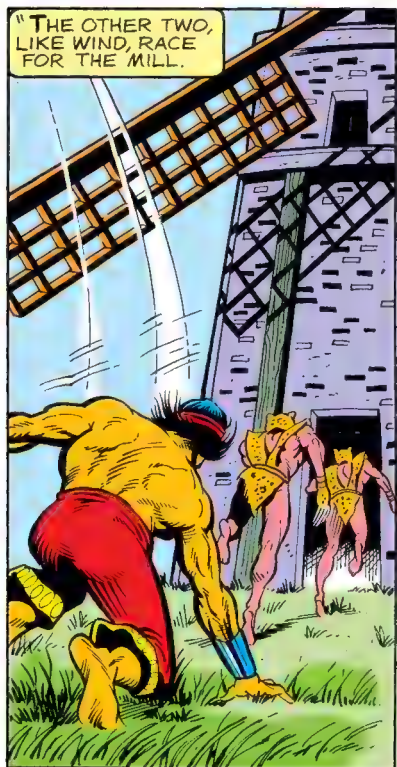
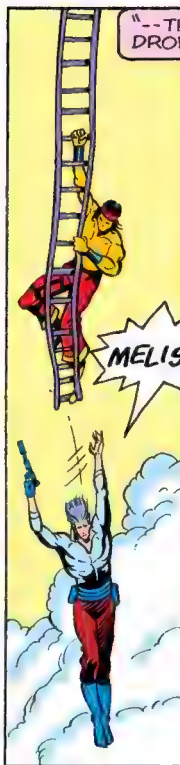
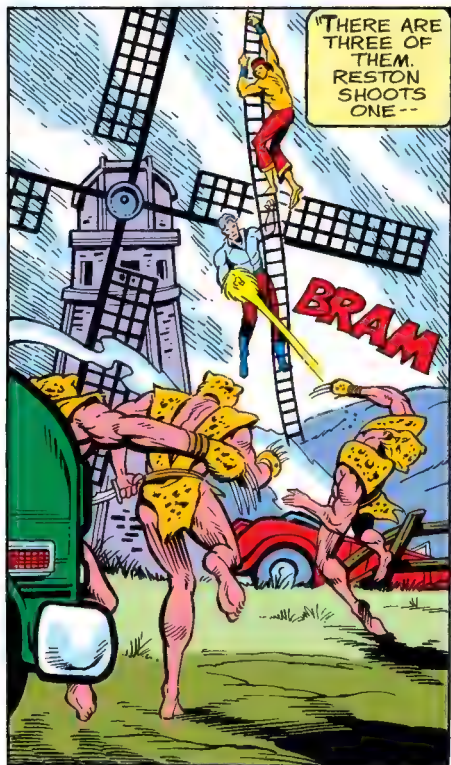
A BLOODY PAGODA!

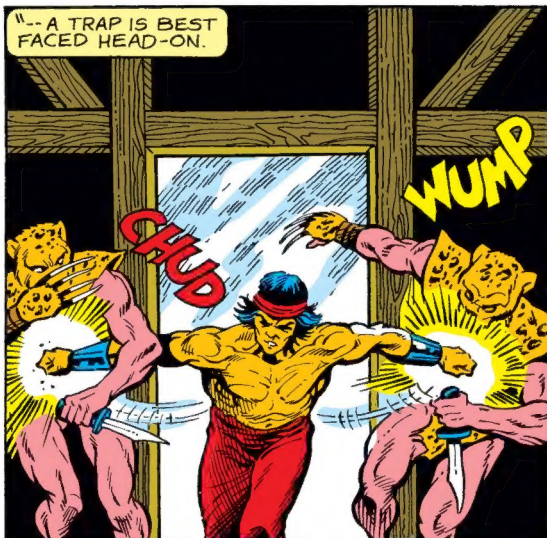
HE HAS CREATED PARADISE FROM HELLISH JUNGLE, INSTALLING HIMSELF AS LORD OF A FORTRESS STYLED AFTER HIS BELOVED OLD CHINA. A GENIUS, BUT MAD AS A MARCH HARE.

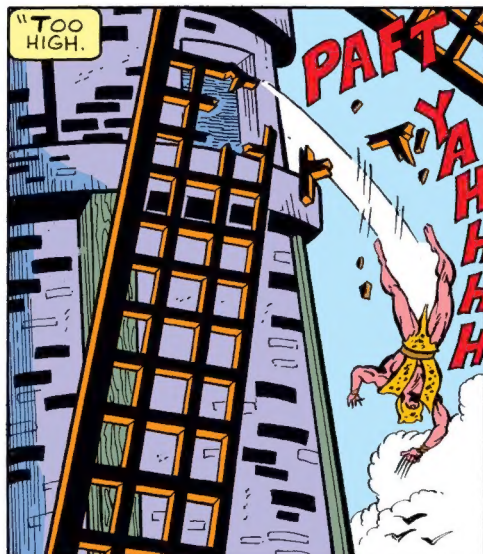
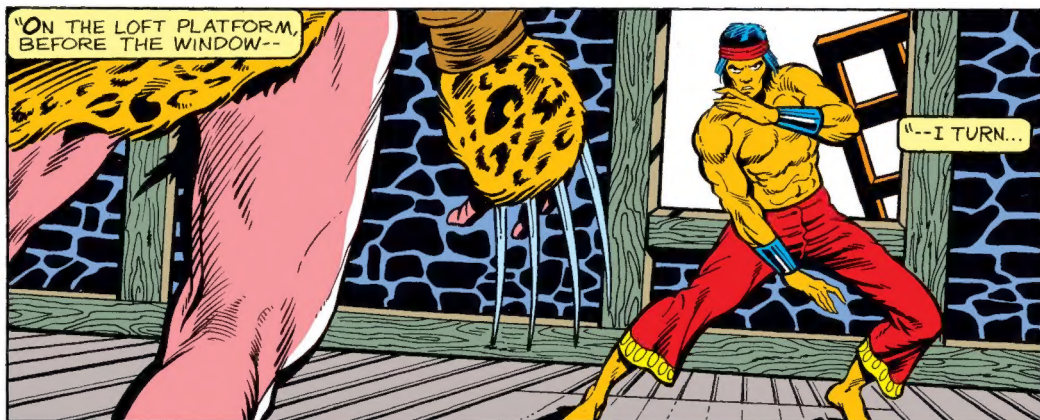
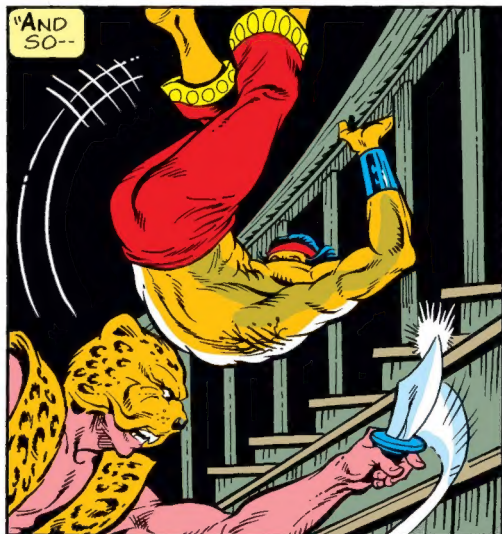


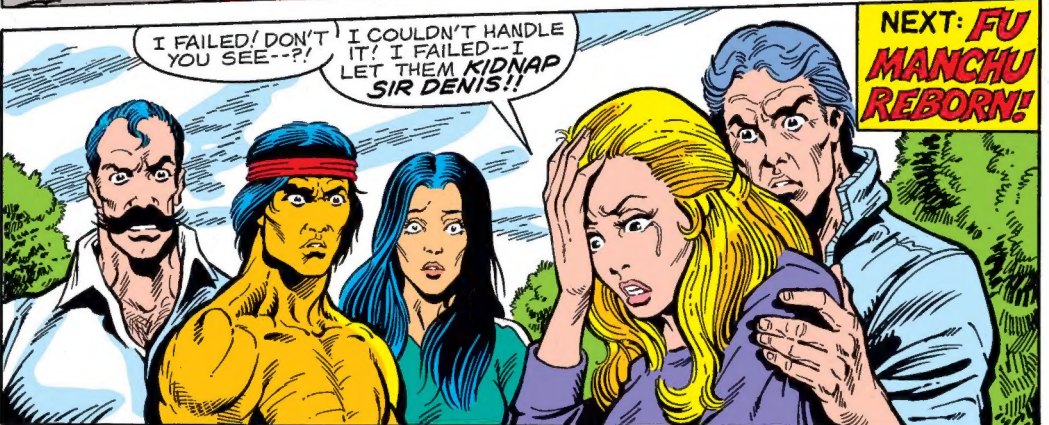
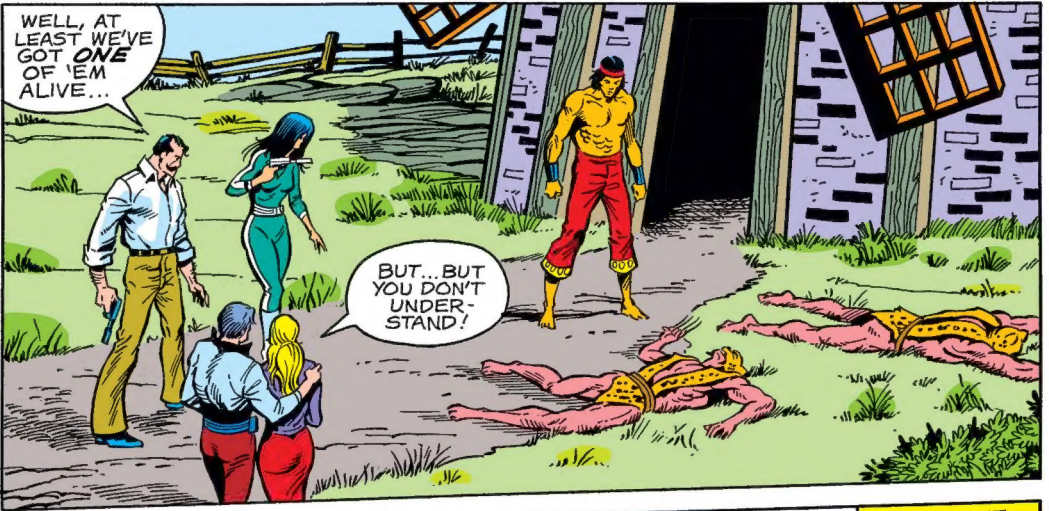
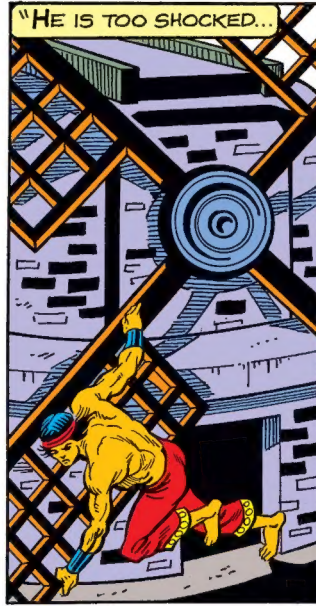












MISSIVES TO THE MASTER!

c/o MARVEL COMICS GROUP
575 Madison Avenue
New York, New York 10022

ROGER STERN
EDITOR
JIM SALICRUP
ASSISTANT EDITOR

First a chuckle, then on to a more serious matter...

Dear Doug,

I was intending to write & tell you that MOKF #75 didn't do much for me...but in the three days which have elapsed since reading it, I have found myself muttering, "Slay, Monstrobot of the Deep!" under my breath whenever the little frustrations of winter in a log cabin get to me. You may think it's incongruous, but "Slay, Monstrobot of the Deep!" is *exactly* the kind of thing that comes to mind when you find the heater stove wood all frozen together in the woodpile and you have to kick it loose with your frozen feet. So, even if you *have* written more emotionally convincing dramas before, I guess MOKF #75 does satisfy *some* need in me.

Keep warm.

Cat Yronwode
Route 1
Willow Springs, MO 65793

When Doug saw your letter, Cat, he nearly laughed his *## off. Write, Yronwode of the Pen! Write!

And now, from the Cat's laugh to the aforementioned heavier matter, also prompted by Cat...

Dear Doug:

I'm happy to respond to some of Cat Yronwode's comments on MOKF. I'll start by saying that I'm familiar with both published letters of hers as well as her articles in *The Comics Journal*, and they have all been consistently perceptive and well expressed.

Cat's major point about Sax Rohmer is that he wrote during a different era and that his work must be judged in that context. I would agree, but offer two items more: 1) Not everyone knows about this, since many younger readers may never have heard of Fu Manchu beyond these pages and therefore will not have that older context in mind; 2) In MOKF, Fu Manchu is *not* "there and then" but decidedly here and now — not written by a "sickie," of course, but nevertheless appearing in character when he does appear without the modifications contemporary sensibilities might normally require. By contrast, Rohmer's negative depictions of Jews and women have not appeared in MOKF; thankfully, they have remained in the then-and-there of the original works.

Cat is right that the established presentation of both Asian heroes and heroines has made the introduction of Asian villains less offensive. Balance, as Shang-Chi or Leiko might observe, is the key issue. My own favorite villain of the comic, in fact, is Shen Kuei. He is a well developed character with individual human concerns realistically portrayed — like all of your own characters, Doug. I have no serious objections to villains of this stamp in this book. *However*: Fu Manchu is not "just" an Asian villain; in Rohmer's own words, he is "the yellow peril incarnate," a representation of his race and the embodiment of evil at the same time. This combination constitutes the heart of my objection to his presence.

I realize that other Asian Americans have not raised these complaints in the letter column, perhaps leading to the impression that I'm the only one bothered by certain issues. I have been active for a number of years with Asian American groups and concerns, including teaching college-level courses dealing with Asian American history and literature and studying the depiction of Asians and Asian Americans in American media. I offer this to indicate that my opinions have not been developed in a vacuum, nor confined to one.

I'm amused to find that I agree with Cat on almost every other aspect of her stated views, varying only in degree at times. In particular, I especially appreciate the sublime complexity, Doug, in both the relationships among the various couples in the storyline and also in the sophisticated panel transitions. However, I will add one further disagreement with Cat; I *do* like the apparent increase in Shang-Chi's anger as the story has progressed. I think it's realistic, given his personal values and the milieu he moves in.

And I'm looking forward, as always, to the next issue.

Bill Wu
3024 Woodland Hills Dr. 14
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Knee-jerk liberalism or not (and these days Doug is almost completely turned off by liberals — and conservatives to boot, for that matter), Moench finds himself siding more with Bill Wu on this issue, perhaps simply by instinct. (And we know Bill is not alone in his concern; Doug once had a long discussion with artist Larry Hama, whose feelings on the matter were if anything even stronger.) But the basic point is simple: In her letter printed in #76, Cat Yronwode excused the racially stereotyped (and, to many, offensive) Fu Manchu character on the grounds that it was a product of earlier, less enlightened times. But, as Bill points out, MASTER OF KUNG FU — occasionally featuring Fu Manchu — is published *now*, in presumably *more* enlightened times, though sometimes you have to wonder...

Nevertheless, in line with this fact and through the voices of Moench, Gulacy, and now Zeck, Marvel has indeed tried to eliminate the potentially offensive aspects of the Fu Manchu character. And here's where we differ somewhat with Bill and, we suspect, agree with Cat's unstated but implicitly between-the-lines point. Bill states that Fu Manchu now appears "without the modifications contemporary sensibilities might normally require." This is not true. We've eliminated the pointed ears, the reptilian-like nictated eye-membranes, and — if we're lucky — the colorists will remember that the queasy yellow complexion is now *verboten*. Also, Fu Manchu's immortality is no longer offered as a Satanic attribute, but rather a scientific extrapolation — indeed, an extrapolation which today's anti-ging researchers feel is entirely feasible. In short, Fu Manchu is now portrayed fully as a human being, both physically and — as we hope was demonstrated in our last Fu Manchu magnum opus — spiritually and psychologically. Indeed, that multi-issue storyline might have been subtitled: "Sympathy for Fu Manchu." Finally, we've tried to stress the fact that Fu Manchu acts alone, not as "a representation of his race." As both Bill and Cat have pointed out, that Fu Manchu is opposed by at least two other major Asian characters should be the proof of our comicbook pudding.

So, while we tend to side a bit more with Bill Wu, we find ourselves agreeing with both Bill and Cat Yronwode. Seems that's the way it always is with emotionally sensitive issues; both sides invariably offer valid points.

All of which brings us to the fact that next issue not only launches another Fu Manchu epic, but also offers an extremely offbeat and unorthodox examination of Fu Manchu himself. It is definitely the strangest issue of MOKF produced to date, and we'll be anxious to hear reactions from both Cat and Bill — as well as everyone else out there. And, all sensibilities aside and intact, Doug and Mike are yanking out all the stops to ensure that this saga will be the very best work they can possibly turn out. Believe us, you won't want to miss it.

Be good.